

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A bistable memory cell, comprising:

a first and second data terminal;

a first and second storage node;

5 an activation terminal;

a first access transistor connected between the first data terminal and the first storage node, wherein a gate terminal of the first access transistor is connected to the activation terminal;

10 a second access transistor connected between the second data terminal and the second storage node, wherein a gate terminal of the second access transistor is connected to the activation terminal;

15 a first pull-down transistor, connected between the first storage node and ground, wherein a gate terminal of the first pull-down transistor is connected to the second storage node; and

20 a second pull-down transistor, connected between the second storage node and ground, wherein a gate terminal of the second pull-down transistor is connected to the first storage node;

wherein the first and second access transistor have a first threshold voltages that are substantially the same, and wherein the first and second pull-down transistors have

second threshold voltages that are substantially the same,
wherein the second threshold voltages are greater than the
first threshold voltages.

2. The memory cell of claim 1, wherein the first and
5 second access and pull-down transistors are all NFETs
(N-channel field effect transistors).

3. The memory cell of claim 1, wherein the first and
second access and pull-down transistors are all NMOSFETs
(N-channel metal oxide semiconductor field effect
10 transistors).

4. The memory cell of claim 1, wherein the second
threshold voltages are about 80 to about 90 mv greater than
the first threshold voltages.

5. The memory cell of claim 1, wherein the first and
15 second access transistors have first channel widths that are
substantially the same, and wherein the first and second
pull-down transistors have second channel widths that are
substantially the same, wherein the second channel widths
are greater than the first channel widths.

6. The memory cell of claim 5, wherein the second channel widths are at least about 3 times greater than the first channel widths.

7. The memory cell of claim 1, wherein the memory
5 cell is a loadless, 4T (4-transistor) SRAM (static random access memory) cell.

8. The memory cell of claim 1, wherein the first and second access transistors and pull-down transistors have devices wells that are commonly connected or shared, wherein
10 the device wells are connected to a common device well line, wherein the device well line is connected to ground potential during standby and wherein the common device well line is bootstrapped to a higher voltage than ground potential during an access operation of the cell to decrease
15 the voltage thresholds of the first and second access and pull-down transistors.

9. The memory cell of claim 8, wherein the device well line is connected to a switch that disconnects the device well line from ground when cell is activated.

10. The memory cell of claim 9, wherein the switch comprises a FET that is responsive to a wordline driver control signal.

11. A loadless 4-transistor SRAM (static random access
5 memory) cell, comprising:

a first and second bit line terminal;

a first and second storage node;

a wordline;

10 a first NFET access transistor connected between the first bit line terminal and the first storage node, wherein a gate terminal of the first access transistor is connected to the wordline;

15 a second NFET access transistor connected between the second bit line terminal and the second storage node, wherein a gate terminal of the second access transistor is connected to the wordline;

20 a first NFET pull-down transistor, connected between the first storage node and ground, wherein a gate terminal of the first pull-down transistor is connected to the second storage node; and

a second NFET pull-down transistor, connected between the second storage node and ground, wherein a gate terminal of the second pull-down transistor is connected to the first storage node;

wherein the first and second NFET access transistors have a first threshold voltages that are substantially the same, and wherein the first and second NFET pull-down transistors have second threshold voltages that are substantially the same, wherein the second threshold voltages are greater than the first threshold voltages.

12. The memory cell of claim 11, wherein the first and second NFET access and pull-down transistors are all NMOSFETs (N-channel metal oxide semiconductor field effect transistors).

13. The memory cell of claim 11, wherein the second threshold voltages are about 80 to about 90 mv greater than the first threshold voltages.

14. The memory cell of claim 11, wherein the first and second access transistors have first channel widths that are substantially the same, and wherein the first and second pull-down transistors have second channel widths that are substantially the same, wherein the second channel widths are greater than the first channel widths.

15. The memory cell of claim 14, wherein the second channel widths are at least about 3 times greater than the first channel widths.

5 16. The memory cell of claim 11, wherein the first and second access transistors and pull-down transistors have devices wells that are commonly connected or shared, wherein the device wells are connected to a common device well line, wherein the device well line is connected to ground potential during standby and wherein the common device well
10 line is bootstrapped to a higher voltage than ground potential during an access operation of the cell to decrease the voltage thresholds of the first and second access and pull-down transistors.

15 17. The memory cell of claim 16, wherein the device well line is connected to a switch that disconnects the device well line from ground when cell is activated.

18. The memory cell of claim 17, wherein the switch comprises a FET that is responsive to a wordline driver control signal.

19. The memory cell of claim 16, wherein the common device well line is bootstrapped with charge from an activated wordline.

20. A memory system, comprising:

5 a memory array comprising an array of memory cells formed on a semiconductor substrate arranged in rows and columns, wherein a row of memory cells is commonly connected to a wordline and wherein a column of memory cells is commonly connected to a bit line pair;

10 a controller for generating address and command signals; and

decoding circuitry for decoding the address and command signals to access memory cells in the memory array,

15 wherein each memory cell in the memory array comprises a loadless 4-transistor SRAM (static random access memory) cell comprising:

a first and second bit line terminal;

a first and second storage node;

a wordline terminal;

20 a first NFET access transistor connected between the first bit line terminal and the first storage node, wherein a gate terminal of the first access transistor is connected to the wordline terminal;

a second NFET access transistor connected between

the second bit line terminal and the second storage node, wherein a gate terminal of the second access transistor is connected to the wordline terminal;

a first NFET pull-down transistor, connected
5 between the first storage node and ground, wherein a gate terminal of the first pull-down transistor is connected to the second storage node; and

a second NFET pull-down transistor, connected
between the second storage node and ground, wherein a
10 gate terminal of the second pull-down transistor is connected to the first storage node;

wherein the first and second NFET access
transistors have a first threshold voltages that are
substantially the same, and wherein the first and
15 second NFET pull-down transistors have second threshold
voltages that are substantially the same, wherein the
second threshold voltages are greater than the first
threshold voltages.

21. The memory system of claim 20, wherein the first
20 and second NFET access and pull-down transistors are
NMOSFETs (N-channel metal oxide semiconductor field effect
transistors).

22. The memory system of claim 20, wherein the first and second access transistors have first channel widths that are substantially the same, and wherein the first and second pull-down transistors have second channel widths that are substantially the same, wherein the second channel widths are greater than the first channel widths.

23. The memory system of claim 22, wherein the second channel widths are at least about 3 times greater than the first channel widths.

24. The memory system of claim 20, wherein each memory cell comprises a device well, and wherein for each row in the memory array, the device wells of memory cells in the row are commonly connected or shared and connected to a common device well line.

25. The memory system of claim 24, wherein the device well line is connected to ground potential during standby and wherein the common device well line is bootstrapped to a higher voltage than ground potential by charge on an activated wordline to decrease the voltage thresholds of the transistors of the memory cells in the corresponding row.

26. The memory cell of claim 25, wherein the common device well line for each row is connected to a corresponding switch that disconnects the device well line from ground when row is activated.

5 27. The memory system of claim 26, wherein the switch comprises a FET that is responsive to a wordline driver control signal.

28. The memory system of claim 24, wherein the memory array comprises a plurality of isolation regions for
10 isolating the device wells of memory cells of adjacent rows in the array.

29. A method for accessing memory, comprising the steps of:

 selecting a row of memory cells in a memory array by
15 activating a wordline corresponding to the row of memory cells;

 bootstrapping charge on the activated wordline to a common device well line that is commonly connected to device wells of memory cells in the selected row to reduce a
20 threshold voltage of transistors of the memory cells in the selected row; and

performing a data access operation for at least one memory cell in the selected row.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the step of bootstrapping comprises:

5 disconnecting the common device well line from a logic "0" potential; and

 capacitively coupling charge to the common device well line from the activated wordline.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the step of
10 disconnecting the common device well line from logic "0" potential comprises activating a switch in response to a wordline driver signal.